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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND WORLD ORDER

*A Statement by the Commission of the
Churches for International Friendship and
Social Responsibility, with a Preface by the
Archbishop of Canterbury, Chairman of the
Commission*

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by the Commission of the Churches

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and
Economic Reconstruction**

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P R E F A C E

BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

THIS pamphlet, like its predecessor *Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction*, is published under the authority of the Commission of the Churches for International Friendship and Social Responsibility, which consists of representatives of all the chief Christian communions in Great Britain except the Roman Catholic. It has not been formally adopted by the Commission in such a way as implies acceptance of every paragraph and sentence; and on some important points certain members of the Commission are in disagreement with it. But it was prepared by a group appointed by the Commission for that purpose; it was at two stages discussed in full sessions of the Commission, as well as by other bodies entitled to speak for the Churches to whom it was submitted; it has been revised in the light of those discussions, and the Commission, by a unanimous vote, authorised its publication.

I hope it may be widely studied in a spirit of constructive criticism. We cannot form any but a very vague estimate of the situation which will confront us after the war; and we must therefore avoid the temptation to formulate actual schemes. But it is of great importance that we should so far as possible settle in our minds the principles by which we mean to guide our action in face of the situation confronting us, whatever that may turn out to be.

I believe that this pamphlet can give invaluable help in that direction.

(Signed) WILLIAM CANTUAR

May 7th, 1942.

Chairman of Commission.

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THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND WORLD ORDER

The following statement seeks to set out, first, the central truths about world order which the Christian revelation contains; second, the bearing of these truths upon the actual contemporary situation; and third, the special and distinctive task of the Church as the society which is called the Body of Christ. It is directed to those who seek some indication, in short space, of the guidance which Christian principles offer in this important field; whether they be Christians who wish to think their way into the implications of their Christian faith as it confronts the characteristic modern problems, or men of affairs outside the Church who desire to know where Christians stand on these matters.

I. BASIC RELIGIOUS AFFIRMATIONS

1. The Rule of God.

In the well-known letter addressed to *The Times* on December 21st, 1940, by the leaders of Church life in England,* the Ten Points to which the letter drew attention were prefaced by the following sentences:

“The present evils in the world are due to the failure of nations and peoples to carry out the laws of God. No permanent peace is possible in Europe unless the principles of the Christian religion are made the foundation of national policy and of all social life. This involves regarding all nations as members of one family under the fatherhood of God.”

The divine will is the origin of all creation, and God's rule the ultimate reality of an order to which all human things inescapably belong and in which alone they find their proper meaning and fulfilment. Knowledge of God's will and obedience to His rule are thus necessary conditions of all true and worthy living and not merely adornments to be added to a structure which may be successfully built on a totally different foundation. To ignore or to flout the rule of God leads inevitably towards disintegration and disaster.

Since God is One God and the Father of all mankind, the peoples belong to a single family, and this truth of their relation to one another in the divine scheme of love ought to govern the actions of separate nations in a world of nations.

*The text of the letter is given in an Appendix.

2. The Reality of Sin.

The realistic understanding of the facts of human society shows the perversion which has been wrought in this divine order by the fact of human sin. Nationhood, which ought to carry with it responsibility under God towards other nations, becomes a claim to absolute sovereignty and unbridled self-interest. The diverse endowments of the nations are made not a source of common enrichment but a cause of sectional aggrandisement and tyranny. The administration of justice is made dependent upon the whim of the ruler or is used for increasing the power of the few. The element of power in the state, instead of being the guarantee of stability, becomes the engine of oppression. But the life of mankind, wrenched thus from its true centre, cannot escape the evil consequences of its self-perversion; for God still rules when His rule is rejected. It can never be too solemnly impressed upon the conscience of men that the breaking of the laws of God is not an escape from bondage into freedom, but a lapse from freedom into bondage: the wages of sin is death.

3. Christ as Restorer of the Divine Order.

In Jesus Christ God has opened the way for men to rebuild their life in a true relation to its lost centre.

Christ has once and for all revealed God as not only the righteous Judge before whom no man and no nation can disown responsibility or plead privilege but also the Heavenly Father whose love embraces all men and provides for their needs of body and spirit. This revelation comes to its climax in the death and resurrection of Christ, and in the living Lord powers are made available for the redemption of human personality in all its aspects of reason, feeling and will.

To receive and live by this revelation means to be reconciled to God and worship Him as Father, to use the riches of nature as a trust from His hand, and to recognize in human nature this added dignity that He who created men also sent His Son to die for them. Since the Christian revelation is world-wide and impartial in its meaning and purpose, to live by it means also to accept the obligation of working into the texture of human life the principle of brotherly love which is implied in a common sonship to God—and this not only as between one man and another but also as between the various groupings of mankind.

4. The Church as Herald of the Divine Order.

In the Church of Christ there is given to man a society divine and human which is itself the earnest of a reconstituted humanity. The Church is a divine society in that it was created by Christ who alone is its King and Head, and depends continually for its true life upon the gift of His Spirit. To this divine origin and support are to be traced the Church's extension in the world, its power to serve mankind in every age and the renewal of its life in periods of torpor and decay. But the members of the Church, as a human society, even though they are the subjects of God's grace, remain implicated in the sinful life of the world. Hence it comes that the errors and sins of Christians have contributed to the sum of human failure and misery. The brotherhood that should be created by a common sonship to God has not always been sufficient to cast out the demons of greed and pride, sloth and cowardice, and to transfigure class selfishness, national arrogance and racial prejudice. By their defective grasp of the Gospel itself, and of the gift of divine life by which the Church is distinguished from all human societies, Christians have obstructed the working out of God's purpose, for human stubbornness and ecclesiastical pride have helped to create and maintain the Church's disunity.

Nevertheless, with all its weaknesses and divisions, the Church remains the one society in which a principle exists which, in so far as it is understood and accepted, must transcend and harmonize human divisions. Its members are divided by race, colour, language, wealth, culture and government. Yet they are united in the common acknowledgment of that which they could not do for themselves, but which God in Christ has done for them. The Church is thus the earnest, the herald and the instrument of the true, divine ordering of humanity, which it is the will of God to restore among men.

II. REALITIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF HUMAN SOCIETY

There is a wide agreement among Christian people in many countries upon the basal realities which must be recognised and the moral demands which must be observed if the rule of God is to be obeyed and the disasters avoided which flow from contempt of it.

1. The Dignity of Man as Child of God.

Foremost among these is the dignity of man as the child of God, and the respect that is therefore due to any and every man. It is one of the major tragedies of modern society that the true basis of this view of man and of human life has been largely forgotten. It is based upon the acknowledgment that man is created by God, that the infinite love of God for individual man has been set forth in Jesus Christ, and that the end and meaning of man's life is to learn and do the will of God in love. This doctrine has been changed into one of a natural and inherent human goodness which in its own right and power, and apart from God, can be trusted to maintain and renew itself and to build on earth a worthy life and society. Many people seem to believe that in expressing some such view they are aligning themselves with the Christian position. One of the lessons which the present crisis of western society is teaching our generation is that the human values cannot be maintained in their own strength. The truth is that the worth of man is to be understood in virtue of man's dependence upon God and God's acts towards man.

2. Religious Freedom.

If the nature and dignity of man are held to depend upon God, man's intercourse with God is his most precious and vital privilege. Any view, therefore, of the world which seeks to apply Christian standards of judgment will attach supreme importance to full religious freedom, so that religious faith may be exercised without external restraint and provided with opportunities for unhampered growth. Religious freedom must include, both for individuals and for organised bodies, liberty to worship, preach and teach according to conviction, the right of public witness, and freedom to bring up children in the faith of their parents; and it should definitely include the right of individuals to enter or leave a religious community or to transfer from one to another, for a man has no true religious freedom if he is free only to remain in the religious community in which he was born. In order that such freedom should not impinge upon the rights and liberties of others, it should be subject to a reasonable interpretation of public order and to generally accepted moral standards; and no legal penalty or disability should be attached to membership or non-membership of any religious community.

3. The Divisions of Mankind.

If we take seriously the fact of the divine creation and the divine providence, it is right to pay much regard to the natural and historical divisions and groupings of mankind. Society has never been composed of mere individuals, a vast conglomeration of atoms united only by the fact that they are all human: the life of the individual and his freedom have been strengthened and enriched by different types of social groupings. But history teaches that loss and suffering fall upon men in proportion as their natural divisions and groupings are exalted above the total unity which they are designed to enrich. The true principle of human society is a unity which is yet a diversity. The instances of diversity which are the most important for the present context are the phenomena of race and nationhood.* These are different, since race is defined on the basis of physical characteristics such as colour, while national spirit is nurtured by history, language and culture, with or without a common physical basis; but both form constituent elements in the complex structure of human society. The unity in diversity of which the divine creation and providence speak demands both that the rights of these human groupings shall be respected and also that they shall be subordinated to the needs and to the life of the total family, which is the family of God.

4. The Resources of Nature.

The same principle of diversity in unity which we find to exist in the ordering of human society is to be found also in the economic ordering of the world. There is sufficient provision for the needs of all mankind in the riches of the earth, but these riches are distributed among the different parts of the earth in great variety. The prosperity of the whole human family depends upon the degree to which the total resources of the earth can be made available for the needs of all. As the population of the world grows the fact that all nations are economically interdependent becomes more and more plain. Already it is clear that the greedy or extravagant use by a single people of the resources which they control or of which they can gain command may be fraught with disaster not merely to others, but to themselves also; and that the reckless exploitation of the earth's resources as a whole may prejudice the welfare of future generations.

*The institution of the family, the basic unit of human society, will be the subject of a future statement by the Commission.

5. Justice and Law.

A main element in the health of the human society is justice ; and a main safeguard of justice is a body of law reflecting current conceptions of right and administered by an impartial judiciary. The content of the body of law grows, develops and changes as the nations grow. But the expression of justice within a given system of laws, though imperfect and constantly needing to be developed and enriched, has still an authority greater than that of a mere temporary convention. Justice and law are a main foundation of human society because they are a witness within it to divine law. If law in the state is felt to be a reflection, however imperfect, of something objective and universal, so that even the state itself may be judged by it, a strong bulwark is provided for the poor and weak. True freedom goes hand in hand with respect for law as the form of justice ; and when law and justice are thought to belong only to the need or convenience of the state and to have no sanction beyond the power of the state which decrees them, there is an end of freedom.

6. The Factor of Power.

The maintenance of human society, both within the national state and in the world as a whole, demands a recognition of the exercise of power both in the prevention and punishment of wrong-doing and in the maintenance of public order. The security and stability of the community cannot be maintained without a minimum of compulsive power for which those who exert it are responsible to God. In a sinful world there can be no durable society, whether national or international, without the stabilising element of power. But the immense technological advances of recent times have placed in the hands of the modern state powers of a kind never dreamed of before. A modern state can exert a degree of control over the individual hitherto unknown, and the concentration of modern power in the hands of a ruthless government can be a danger to the whole world. Christians have always known that power was both necessary to the state and dangerous to the user, and that the more absolute power becomes, the greater the danger. The Christian principle is that all power is held under God's command, and that the human responsibility to Him is final. Political history and human experience show that the regulation of power by responsibility is best achieved as power is divided and decentralised and responsibility shared. The problem of power is a principal problem of the modern world. The chaos of post-war

society and the need for a large measure of collective and international action must increase the range over which centralized power is exerted. The need, therefore, for the assertion of moral responsibility and moral law in control of power is outstanding.

7. The Supremacy of Love.

Justice expressing itself in law and holding force in reserve for the restraint and punishment of wrongdoers is a characteristic virtue of the state as such. But the actual laws of a state (or the laws which govern inter-state relations) at any given time may be imperfectly just. Laws justify themselves to the Christian conscience in proportion as they honour and safeguard the Christian conception of man and give increasing play to the principle of love.

There must thus be for Christians who are members of the Church and who live in the nation or state, a constant tension or inter-play between the characteristic principles of state and Church. A characteristic virtue of the state is justice, and justice lies at the foundation of human happiness and freedom in society. Yet the Church lives by a principle by which justice needs continually to be interpreted and reinterpreted—the principle of love. While the Christian will not deny that the state must use force in administering law, he must ever remember that the Church in the Christian experience of forgiveness and in its acceptance of the divine task of reconciliation has in its charge the secret of a more radical way of dealing with evil.

III. CONDITIONS OF A NEW WORLD ORDER

To apply these principles to the actual human scene which now confronts us will involve, among other things, facing the following necessities:

1. A Common Moral Purpose.

Unless our political and economic systems are animated by a compelling moral purpose in accord with the will of God for men, they must fail to establish a true world order. The problem is not fundamentally political or economic or military, but moral and spiritual. The collapse of past attempts at international organisation was due to more than defects of machinery. They

broke down in men's hearts and minds. Lack of a compelling moral purpose will paralyse the most skilful plan.

A generation ago the advance of applied science (especially in the expansion of production and the improvement of communications and means of distribution) was expected almost automatically to promote international understanding and human welfare. Moral issues seemed to many to be irrelevant. Experience has shown that those were right who declared that these views were erroneous and likely to lead to calamity.

Our ability to re-order the world after the war will depend in part upon available materials and man power, but at least as much upon our readiness to admit the obligation to mutual service on the part of nations and of individuals. In wartime we can abolish some of the evils that we tolerated in time of peace, and achieve reforms that were then considered unattainable, because war presents the nation with a cause for which it is ready to sacrifice. Our ability to build a better world will depend upon our accepting a purpose in time of peace which will command a similar readiness. So long as nations maintain that the welfare of other peoples is not their concern and seek only the protection of their own interests and the raising of their own standard of living, so long will peace and welfare elude them all. A common moral purpose is required to direct the world's economic and political systems.

2. Essentials of the Political Framework.

To provide a satisfactory framework, within which the diversified activities of the race can be carried on, and machinery for the effective accomplishment of the common purposes of mankind, there is needed a political order, based upon justice and supported by power. This must involve life and freedom for all nations; as the first of the Ten Points has it, "the will of one nation to live must never mean the sentence of death passed upon another." But national independence cannot be the last word, for that also can be destructive of world order, the solidarity of the whole race, nowhere more conspicuous than in the economic realm, must be reflected in political institutions and in a proper subordination of all nations to the law that should govern them all. A true world order will therefore contain the instrument for declaring law and the means of enforcing it. It will, moreover, be not rigid but flexible, seeking ways whereby changing conditions and national developments may be reflected in political and international institutions. As the third

of the Ten Points says, "it is of the first importance to erect some juridical institution which shall guarantee the loyal and faithful fulfilment of the conditions agreed upon, and which shall in case of recognised need revise and correct them." The fourth speaks of "the equitable and covenanted revision of treaties" where that becomes necessary.

Furthermore, the security and justice of the international system will largely depend upon the development of international organs for research and for handling upon a world scale questions which affect the welfare of all nations. To illustrate the point it is enough to mention the International Labour Organisation and the Economic and Health Sections of the League of Nations.

In the last resort, the successful functioning of any political system, and its assurance of a stable world order, must depend upon the measure in which it provides the political conditions for promoting co-operation among the peoples of the world and for substituting trust and goodwill for fear, hate and envy.

3. Economic Justice.

The present generation is more clearly aware than its predecessor of the great importance of economic justice, and will not accept merely political freedom or safeguards where the realities of economic maladjustment are ignored. Within the state it is understood that political freedom unaccompanied by economic freedom is of little worth; between the states a true international order will make possible the necessary exchange of goods and labour, eliminate that excessive self-sufficiency in economic life which is the result of the fear of war working upon the nation-state, and protect the weaker states from the tyrannous aggression which existing international economic relations have made possible. Only as these conditions are fulfilled will the common man in every land be delivered from a cramped existence and begin to enjoy the level of economic life which is his due.

It is necessary to emphasise the great importance of the part played in world affairs by international finance and the power which it has possessed to derange the proper relationships which should exist between nations and states. In no other department of human affairs is the danger of the irresponsible use of power so great as in international economic relations because a maximum of power may be exerted with a minimum of responsi-

bility. The just use of the resources of the world for the good of all and the proper development of the several national economies have been continually threatened by the existence of powerful financial interests, which, whatever benefits their activities may have conferred, have aimed primarily at profits and power.

4. Disarmament.

The second of the Ten Points says that the nations must be "delivered from the slavery imposed upon them by the race for armaments, and from the danger that material force, instead of serving to protect the right, may become an overbearing and tyrannical master." There can be no doubt that the control of armaments is absolutely essential if mankind is to have energy and resources for the worthier ends of life. Equally, however, it is certain that disarmament cannot be achieved if it is made an end in itself. Nations will only consent to disarm if they have become convinced that there has been or is being established a just world order, political and economic, and that effective machinery for administering and exercising justice among the nations has been or is being created. Disarmament is the fruit of justice and security, and is to be obtained and increased as these are realised in international affairs within a world order.

5. The Rights of Minorities.

A true international order, remembering the principle of the family in which there is diversity in unity, will be solicitous of the rights and needs of minorities. There are both racial minorities and religious minorities and both have been persecuted. Probably the most difficult single problem confronting the world to-day in the sphere of "minorities" is that of the Jews, because they are in part a racial group and in part a religious one, capable alike of complete assimilation and of the most stubborn particularity. The doing of justice to the Jews will be one test of a juster world order.

6. Colonial Systems.

The colonial systems of the world present important and difficult problems. In so far as colonies are sources from which privilege draws advantage—whether that privilege be national or belong to groups within the nation—they must be a disturbance to the world's peace. It is therefore important that the rule by more advanced nations of the parts of the earth inhabited by

backward peoples should be accompanied by equal access to natural resources on the part of all nations. This aspect of the question, however, is less important than that of the rights of the inhabitants of the colonial territories themselves. The world has become too easily accustomed to thinking of the colonial problem largely in terms of international appeasement. The first claim is that of the populations themselves. The human rights of the inhabitants of the colonial territories must be safeguarded and in particular their inalienable right to govern themselves should be recognised and the way prepared as speedily as possible for its realisation. The access of the rest of the world on terms of equality to the resources and produce of colonial territories, while important, must not conflict with the rights of these territories to maintain their own economies in such a way as to safeguard a right standard of living.

IV. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The actual situation which we now face is fluid and uncertain; we cannot foresee the conditions in which the re-ordering of Europe and the world will have to be accomplished. Christians must believe that no conceivable issue to the war could defeat the purpose of God or render the work of the Church meaningless. In this section no more is attempted than to suggest certain major fields in which our responsibility is likely to be great, and the underlying Christian principles in accordance with which this responsibility should be exercised.

1. The Acceptance of Responsibility.

In the event, which is here assumed, that at the close of the war preponderating power will be in the hands of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, Russia and China, these nations must accept the responsibilities which the historic moment puts upon them, not shrinking from a leadership which they cannot escape without treachery. They must also understand the dangers which beset their necessary action; for upon the quality and direction of their leadership may well depend the peace, welfare and progress of the post-war world. They can only free themselves from the charge that they seek domination for themselves by bold and decisive acceptance of certain limitations upon their power. In the first place, they

should accept as binding upon themselves and as guiding and controlling their action the principles of freedom, justice and diffused responsibility which lie at the heart of true democratic tradition and have roots in Christian teaching. In the second place, they should give an effective share in the shaping and direction of the new world now being born to all those states, small as well as great, vanquished as well as victor, which hold to the same principles and will accept the same limitations.

It is most important that British people, for whom in the first instance this document has been prepared, should understand the nature of this responsibility and should learn to look at their actions as they appear to the rest of the world; so that they may avoid that national tendency, of which they are largely unconscious, but to which members of other nations constantly point, to find a certain identity between national advantage or convenience and moral right.

2. Immediate Needs.

The lines of the future are being laid down by what is done now. More may be achieved by shaping the temporary and emergency instruments aright, so that they form the nucleus of a permanent structure, than by attempting the creation of ideal constitutions. If those are right who hold that there ought to be a considerable period between the signing of armistice and the making of settled peace, much will depend, perhaps everything, upon the way in which the emergency tasks are handled.

Conditions both in Europe and in other parts of the world are likely to be chaotic at the conclusion of hostilities. We may well anticipate over extensive areas the breakdown of civil government; the dislocation of trade, industry, commerce and agriculture; widespread hunger and violence. In these circumstances the immediate responsibilities of the British people and their allies must include:

(a) *The restoration of order*, whether by the setting up and encouragement of new national and local administrative authorities, or, if necessary, by the assumption of direct control. In either case action will be needed and should be prepared for now in close association with refugee governments and other representatives of the people concerned, to secure the largest possible degree of agreement on the measures to be adopted; not least upon practical plans for the substitution of the orderly processes of law for the exercise of private vengeance by the

liberated peoples upon their oppressors; and for the training of qualified and sympathetic persons for such administrative positions as may temporarily be required in liberated or in occupied territory. Only by such means can we envisage the eventual restoration of goodwill and of a sense of equality between the peoples upon which alone a satisfactory and durable world order can be built.

(b) *The provision and distribution of food, stock and other primary physical necessities.* The storing of food against the coming of peace, plans for its immediate transportation as soon as the situation permits to those regions where it is most needed, and the erection even now in skeleton form of an international organisation for its distribution, provide illustrations of the kind of action required, which may well provide in the economic field the nucleus of a new international instrument comparable with that already suggested in the last paragraph in the political sphere. These tasks cannot be adequately accomplished without some real sacrifice on the part of the wealthier nations, and for this our people should even now be prepared.

The experience already gained in wartime from the new methods employed by governments in mobilising man-power and organising industry should be of the utmost value in the fashioning of emergency instruments to meet the conditions which will arise when hostilities cease. Much can also be learned from the co-operation of several governments at the present time in common planning with regard to the use of armed force, the provision of military and civil supplies, and the widespread control of the distribution and prices of many commodities.

It is important that the tasks requiring to be performed under emergency conditions during the period of transition should be discharged in such a way as to rehabilitate at the earliest possible moment the economies of the peoples concerned.

3. Relationships with Russia.

If a durable world settlement is to be reached, relationships between Russia and the Western democracies must be placed upon a satisfactory footing. The British and American peoples, and especially Christians, must use to the full the opportunities for understanding the Russian people presented by the present comradeship in arms. While it may readily be agreed that the points of tension have in the past been unduly emphasised, it would be folly to close our eyes to the fact that they still remain

largely unrelieved. Fundamentally these points of tension have been two: in the social and economic sphere between the capitalist and communist types of organisation of the life of the community, both no doubt somewhat modified in practice from the theories upon which they are based, but each deeply suspicious of the other; in the religious sphere between a theoretically Christian and a theoretically materialistic basis for the life of the state and of the community. Pending the attainment of a common outlook in both spheres, it is essential that on both sides suspicion should be replaced by understanding and appreciation of all that is good in the other.

The importance of Russia lies not merely in the vast populations and resources governed by the Soviet, but also in the fact that under the forms and methods of Communism a regime has been created in which the rights and needs of the common man are prior to the rights of property. The extent of this achievement, not only in the economic but also in the social and cultural spheres, can hardly be exaggerated. The degree to which Communism was rigidly Marxian and consciously godless probably dictated the degree to which it expressed itself in a new form of tyranny, but the democracies of the West will only at their peril ignore the lessons which the Russian development and experience teach or the widespread hopes which it has aroused.

4. The Future of the Axis Powers.

No future settlement can be permanent which leaves Germany in Europe and Japan in the Far East as aggrieved, rebellious and potentially dangerous powers. In view, however, of the inevitable uncertainty as to the conditions under which the war may end, we can here only indicate such guiding principles as seem to us to spring from the basic Christian affirmations about God and man.

(a) We repudiate any attempt to solve this problem in a spirit of revenge.

(b) We repudiate a vague sentimentalism which ignores past crimes and future dangers.

(c) No solution can be regarded as satisfactory which does not on the one hand provide adequate safeguards to all peoples against military or economic aggression by others, and on the other provide full opportunities to all, victors and vanquished alike, to develop their own national and cultural life within the framework of world order.

5. Relationships Between East and West.

It may confidently be anticipated that as a direct result of the world war, the importance of both China and India in the councils of the world will be vastly enhanced. These great nations, which between them comprise a very large proportion of the total population of the world, whose territories contain vast riches, as yet only partially made available for their own and for other peoples, are likely to play a growingly important part upon the stage of the world. In their ancient civilisations and their many noble traditions they have much to contribute to the common culture of the world; while the vigorous and rapidly growing Christian Churches in their midst give hope that they may be able to bring new life and vision to the older Churches, and to provide a most important medium of common understanding between East and West. It will not be easy effectually to harmonise the varied ideals and the varied ethical and cultural traditions of these Eastern lands with those of the West, so as to provide a common basis for the new world order, but the task is of quite major importance.

Before we are likely to make progress in this direction it will be necessary to get rid of any fancied superiority of the white to the coloured races; to resist the colour bar in political, industrial and social life, on the ground that it is contrary to the Christian doctrine of man as made in the image of God and the subject of redemption in Christ; and to accord to the Eastern and African peoples, as of right, a place in the common councils of the nations in no way inferior in status or dignity to that of the peoples of the West, and an influence corresponding to their importance in the world.

V. THE CHURCH'S DISTINCTIVE TASK

So far the general Christian task has been considered—and the application of Christian principles and insights to the concrete problems which face the world and must be handled by statesmen and citizens. There is, however, a distinctive task which falls to the Church as such, in virtue of its essential nature and mission. This task no other agency will or can perform. It is that of witness to God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ and to the continuing work of His Spirit in the world.

The task of the Church must begin within its own borders. It must acknowledge its share of the human guilt which has brought mankind to its present state. Even when most convinced of the truth and efficacy of the Christian message, the Church has signally failed to convince the world of its relevance. For many reasons, not all the fault of the Church, its authority has been waning for generations. It must face the fact, with searching of heart, that only a minority of men heed what it says or look to it for help. Often the Church has failed to see clearly the meaning of its Gospel for contemporary events. It has often failed to demonstrate in its own life the standards of human conduct which it proclaims. In particular, in the international realm, Christians should ask themselves how far any effective Christian witness has been uttered against the failures and mistakes which succeeded the last war; how far Christian testimony was offered against doctrines of racial superiority; or how far the Church helped to prepare the public mind for such economic and political readjustments and sacrifices as might have preserved world peace.

Only with penitence for its own record can the Church undertake its task in the world.

1. Evangelism.

The primary duty of the Church is to proclaim the Christian Gospel. The Church exists in virtue of the divine revelation, and it has no duty so urgent and inescapable as that of proclaiming the supremacy of God over all created things and the dependence of men upon His unmerited Love. A sacred duty lies upon the Church to make the reality of God evident to those who do not know Him. By the very nature of its own divinely inspired fellowship as well as by the witness in word and life of its individual members, it must seek to win men to the acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ in the lives of men and of nations.

This task of evangelism concerns those who have forgotten a Christianity their fathers knew, no less than those who belong to other religious traditions or to none. The missionary movement links the peoples of Europe and America with those of Africa and Asia as perhaps nothing else does. In Germany today a large part of the younger generation has been so poisoned by the inculcation of Nazi principles that there is need for a systematic re-education in the basal truths of the Gospel. The heroic witness of so many in the European Churches in

face of terrible trial gives promise of noble evangelistic service when the opportunity offers. In our own country, too, the need is great. We are only now awakening to the extension of pagan thought and morals amongst us.

In a world in which idolatries have so largely supplanted true faith in God, nothing is so greatly needed as living testimony to the fact of God's loving purpose in Christ for the whole world. The Church could be occupied in a multitude of good works and yet achieve nothing, if in the heart of its life there should cease to be a fountain of prayer and adoration and the recognition that a higher than human wisdom is ever breaking forth from the word of God. The most important task of the Christian Church in aiding the growth of world order, is to proclaim the Gospel. The greatest need of the world is not efficient planning but a recognition of the Lordship of Christ.

2. The Kingdom of God.

In the establishment of this Lordship of Christ lies the secret of that compelling moral purpose which mankind has to find or perish. The Kingdom of God must never be confused with any quest for an earthly Utopia. The task of the Church is primarily concerned with eternal realities which transcend time and which cannot be fully expressed in terms of this world. Material comfort and prosperity will never meet the deepest needs of man. He may gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul. Yet all that is needed for human well-being, physically and spiritually, is included in the gift of God's Kingdom. It is part of the distinctive task of the Church to seek that Kingdom on earth as well as in heaven. If we seek that Kingdom first, all these other good things will be added to us.

In seeking God's Kingdom the Christian heroes and saints of all the ages have found a purpose that made them forget self and spend their lives in whole-hearted service of mankind. If Christians generally—if men at large—could see the splendour of human society as it is meant to be in God's plan and would give themselves to this service, they would find there the compelling purpose the world so sorely needs.

3. The World-wide Fellowship.

The Church must realise more fully its own ecumenical character as arising out of the Gospel it proclaims. The Church is primarily a universal fellowship united by God's grace and

indwelt by Christ's spirit; it is only secondarily local or denominational or national. To express this as it should be expressed will demand reform and reorganisation of the Church's own life, much closer Christian co-operation locally and nationally, and more thorough education of its young people and its members generally in the achievements and obligations of its world-wide fellowship. The post-war period will present opportunities for intercourse between Christians in the belligerent countries such as might be both a Christian witness and an important element in restoring understanding and friendship.

It is much to be desired that as soon as conditions make it possible either a meeting of the World Council of Churches (launched almost on the eve of the war) or a specially summoned world Christian conference should be held, with the object of testifying that our unity in Christ remains and enabling Christians of different countries to face together the needs and problems of the post-war world.

4. Social Justice.

The important place in world order of social and economic questions has been stressed in this statement. The Church has a distinctive task in this realm also. The Commission of the Churches has already issued a parallel statement on *Social Justice and Economic Reconstruction* to which readers of this statement are referred. The common enterprise of seeking social justice in all countries will itself be a bond between the Churches.

5. Reconciliation.

The more the minds of men grapple with the political and economic problems of reconstruction, the clearer it becomes that the deepest needs are not met on this plane. The despair, fear and revenge which must inevitably possess much of the world are not to be cast out save by divine forgiveness and release of which the Church, not by its merits but by God's ordinance, is the messenger and trustee. More important than economic and political planning is the re-creation of broken men and women, the supplanting of hopelessness by hope, of revenge by forgiveness, of fear by love. No scheme of international reconstruction can avail that does not rest upon and arise out of minds that desire world fellowship and have banished hatred and schemes of mere national self-aggrandisement. Without such a spiritual foundation no enduring struc-

ture can be built and it is not a foundation that men can lay for themselves, but only as they come to the knowledge of their dependence upon God and are able to receive His enabling power.

In the Providence of God the fellowship of the Church has in this generation extended more widely throughout the world and at the same time become more closely knit than ever before. If the Church is true to its own inherent mission, it can speak—though humbly because of its past failures—a distinctive and confident word of hope and guidance to mankind; and it can show in its own life an example of divinely created fellowship, bridging the gulfs of class, nation and race. Such a Church will be an instrument in the hand of God for the creation of that world order which is in accord with His purpose and which without Him can never come into being. The world order we seek is one that has foundations and its builder and maker is God.

A P P E N D I X

LETTER TO *The London Times*, DECEMBER 21ST, 1940

SIR,

The present evils in the world are due to the failure of nations and peoples to carry out the laws of God. No permanent peace is possible in Europe unless the principles of the Christian religion are made the foundation of national policy and of all social life. This involves regarding all nations as members of one family under the Fatherhood of God.

We accept the five points* of Pope Pius XII as carrying out this principle:

I. A fundamental postulate of any just and honourable peace is an assurance for all nations great or small, powerful or weak, of their right to life and independence. The will of one nation to live must never mean the sentence of death passed upon another. When this equality of rights has been destroyed, attacked or threatened, order demands that reparation shall be made, and the measure and extent of that reparation is determined not by the sword nor by the arbitrary decision of self-interest, but by the rules of justice and reciprocal equity.

II. The order thus established, if it is to continue undisturbed and ensure true peace, requires that the nations be delivered from the slavery imposed upon them by the race for armaments, and from the danger that material force, instead of serving to protect the right, may become an overbearing and tyrannical master. Any peaceful settlement which fails to give fundamental importance to a mutually agreed, organic and progressive disarmament, spiritual as well as material, or which neglects to ensure the effective and loyal implementing of such an agreement, will sooner or later show itself to be lacking in coherence and vitality.

III. The maxims of human wisdom require that in any reorganization of international life all parties should learn a lesson from the failures and deficiencies of the past. Hence in

*The fuller form of the Pope's points is included in place of the abbreviation which appeared in *The Times* letter, as the meaning of them is thus more clearly seen.

creating or reconstructing international institutions which have so high a mission and such difficult and grave responsibilities, it is important to bear in mind the experience gained from the ineffectiveness or imperfections of previous institutions of the kind. Human frailty renders it difficult, not to say impossible, to foresee every contingency and guard against every danger at the moment in which treaties are signed; passion and bitter feeling are apt to be still rife. Hence in order that a peace may be honourably accepted, and in order to avoid arbitrary breaches and unilateral interpretations of treaties, it is of the first importance to erect some juridical institution which shall guarantee the loyal and faithful fulfilment of the conditions agreed upon, and which shall, in case of recognized need, revise and correct them.

IV. If a better European settlement is to be reached there is one point in particular which should receive special attention: it is the real needs and the just demands of nations and populations, and of racial minorities. It may be that, in consequence of existing treaties incompatible with them, these demands are unable to establish a strictly legal right. Even so, they deserve to be examined in a friendly spirit with a view to meeting them by peaceful methods, and even, where it appears necessary, by means of an equitable and covenanted revision of the treaties themselves. If the balance between nations is thus adjusted and the foundation of mutual confidence thus laid many incentives to violent action will be removed.

V. But even the best and most detailed regulations will be imperfect and foredoomed to failure unless the peoples and those who govern them submit willingly to the influence of that spirit which alone can give life, authority and binding force to the dead letter of international agreements. They must develop that sense of deep and keen responsibility which measures and weighs human statutes according to the sacred and inviolable standards of the law of God; they must cultivate that hunger and thirst after justice which is proclaimed as a beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount and which supposes as its natural foundation the moral virtue of justice. They must be guided by that universal love which is the compendium and most general expression of the Christian ideal, and which therefore may serve as a common ground also for those who have not the blessing of sharing the same faith with us.

With these basic principles for the ordering of international life we would associate five standards by which economic situations and proposals may be tested.

1. Extreme inequality in wealth and possessions should be abolished.

2. Every child, regardless of race or class, should have equal opportunities of education, suitable for the development of his peculiar capacities.

3. The family as a social unit must be safeguarded.

4. The sense of a Divine vocation must be restored to a man's daily work.

5. The resources of the earth should be used as God's gifts to the whole human race, and used with due consideration for the needs of the present and future generations.

We are confident that the principles which we have enumerated would be accepted by rulers and statesmen throughout the British Commonwealth of Nations and would be regarded as the true basis on which a lasting peace could be established.

COSMO CANTUAR

Archbishop of Canterbury.

A. CARDINAL HINSLEY

Archbishop of Westminster.

WALTER H. ARMSTRONG

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WILLIAM EBOR

Archbishop of York.

